

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
OPR-02 AID-05 IO-13 ACDA-12 SIL-01 LAB-04 EB-08
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CA-01 USSS-00 OC-06 CCO-00 /145 W
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P 311541Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY ANTANANARIVO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 579
INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS
AMEMBASSY VICTORIA
AMEMBASSY MOPUTO
CINCPACFLT PRIORITY
CINCUSNAVEUR
USCINCEUR
DIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANTANANARIVO 0986

DEPT PASS AMEMBASSY MOPUTO, AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MA, PINS
SUBJ: STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS, LOOTING AND ANSON IN ANTANANARIVO

1. SUMMARY. ANTANANARIVO IS QUIET TODAY WITH ARMED MILITARY
PATROLLING DOWNTOWN SECTIONS. GOVERNMENT INFORMATION APPARATUS
IS EXCULPATING STUDENTS FROM ANY RESPONSIBILITY AND EVEN SOME
OF UNEMPLOYED CLASS WHICH PROVIDED THE LOOTERS. TROUBLES BEING
BLAMED ON "ENEMIES OF REVOLUTION", "ARMED BY REACTIONARY FORCES
AND IMPERIALISTS." NOTHING HAS BEEN HEARD FFOM PRESIDENT RATSIRAKA
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DURING THIS PERIOD AND HE IS SAID TO BE IN PROVINCE OF TAMATAVE.
END SUMMARY.

2.CITY HAS BEEN QUIET SINCE YESTERDAY AT MID-AFTERNOON WHEN ARMY
UNITS PEACEFULLY CLEARED OUT DOWNTOWN AREA. ARMED MILITARY ARE
NOW VERY MUCH IN EVIDENCE THROUGHOUT CITY.SOME OF THEM WERE
FLOWN IN FROM PROVINCES YESTERDAY, INCLUDING A CONTINGENT

FROM TAMATAVE WHICH WAS REPORTEDLY TRAINED BY NORTH KOREANS AND MAKES AN IMPRESSIVE SHOW OF DISCIPLINE AND SMARTNESS AS IT GUARDS PRESIDENTIAL PALACE. DEATH TOLL IS STILL CITED AT THREE BUT THERE ARE SAID TO BE MANY WOUNDED. 150 HAVE BEEN ARRESTED ACCORDING TO OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT.

3. RADIO AND PRESS ARE STRESSING THAT STUDENTS WERE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR VIOLENCE AND LOOTING, FOR THEY SUPPORT THE REVOLUTION. STRANGER STILL, THE GOVERNMENT, AFTER FIRST BLAMING THE VIOLENCE AND LOOTING ON THE UNEMPLOYED, KNOWN HERE AS "ZOAMS," A LOOSE SOMEWHAT POLITICAL ASSOCIATION OF VIOLENCE-PRONE UNEMPLOYED, NOW SAYS THAT THIS MOVEMENT CANNOT BE BLAMED IN ITS ENTIRETY AS MANY ARE STAUNCH SUPPORTERS OF THE REVOLUTION. GOVERNMENT NOW DIRECTLY SAYS THESE EVENTS WERE POLITICALLY MOTIVATED AND DIRECTED AT DISCREDITING OR STOPPING THE REVOLUTION. COMPARISONS ARE MADE WITH ATTEMPTED OR SUCCESSFUL COUPS IN SEYCHESLLES AND COMORES, AND EVEN WITH EVENTS IN ANGOLA, RHODESIA, AND BENIN. PRESIDENT RATSIRAKA'S WARNING IS RECALLED OF DARK PLOTS BETWEEN FOREIGNERS AND LOCAL TRAITORS, SUCH AS MAY HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN ILLEGAL LANDING OF SOUTH AFRICAN PLANE LAST YEAR, I.E., AIRCRAFT WHICH BROUGHT IN AMERICAN PRISONER EDMUND LAPPEMAN.

4. GOVERNMENT ALSO DENOUNCING RUMOURS OF COMPLICITY BY A MEMBER OF ALL POWERFUL SUPREME REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL (SRC)-- WHICH CAN ONLY MEAN RADICAL LEFTISTS MANANDAFY, WHO HAS RELATIONS WITH CONFIDENTIAL

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ZOAMS IN THE PAST. GOVERNMENT ALSO GOES TO TROUBLE OF DENYING THAT BODY OF SLAIN STUDENT WAS STOLEN BY SRC.

5. SLAIN MAN, IT TURNS OUT, WAS NOT STUDENT BUT 22 YEAR OLD MAN WHO HAD GONE TO AREA TO PICK UP HIS YOUNGER BROTHER AT A NEARBY PRIMARY SCHOOL AND GOT CAUGHT UP IN CROWD OF STUDENTS. SLAIN EUROPEAN WAS A FRENCH SECRETARY AT FRENCH EMBASSY WHO WAS KILLED INSTANTLY BY A STRAY BULLET IN THE HEAD WHILE WATCHING EVENTS FROM FOURTH FLOOR OF EMBASSY WHICH IS SOME DISTANCE FROM SCENE OF VIOLENCE.

6. BEHAVIOR OF LOOTERS HAS COUSED SEVERAL MALAGASY CONTACTS TO BELIEVE THAT THEY WERE NOT ACTING SPONTANEOUSLY BUT WERE TURNED LOOSE TO EXPLOIT TENSION AND DISORDER CAUSED BY STUDENT-POLICE CONFRONTATION. NO NON-INDIAN STORES WERE LOOTED AND EVEN SOME INDIAN ESTABLISHMENTS WERE SPARED RIGHT IN MIDDLE OF THE AFFECTED

AREA. LOOTING GANGS APPARENTLY HAD LEADERS WHO INDICATED WHICH SHOPS TO HIT OR NOT TO HIT, AND THE RANSACKING AND LOOTING WAS DONE IN SYSTEMATIC FASHION.

7. BEHAVIOR OF SECURITY FORCES WENT FROM ONE EXTREME TO ANOTHER.

AFTER CONFRONTATION WITH STUDENTS BECAME VIOLENT ON MORNING OF MAY 29, SOME OF POLICE THREW DOWN WEAPONS AND RAN. NO RESISTANCE WAS MADE TO BURNING OF THREE POLICE BUILDINGS BY MOBS ON AFTERNOON OF MAY 29. ON MORNING AND EARLY AFTERNOON OF MAY 30, THERE WERE ONLY A FEW SPORADIC ATTEMPTS TO PURSUE INDIVIDUALS LEAVING WITH THEIR LOOTED GOODS BUT NONE TO DRIVE THEM AWAY FROM THE STORES IN THE FIRST PLACE. IN MID-AFTERNOON OF MAY 30 REINFORCEMENTS FROM PROVINCES ARRIVED, AN IMPRESSIVE SHOW OF STRENGTH WAS MADE IN MAIN AVENUE OF CITY, AND IT WAS ALL OVER. ONLY STUDENTS WERE ALLOWED TO HOLD PEACEFUL MEETINGS AT DESIGNATED SPOTS.

8. WE ARE RELIABLY INFORMED THAT PRESIDENT RATSIRAKA IS NOW IN TAMATAVE PROVINCE AND THAT HE MAY HAVE LEFT HIS PALACE AT ABOUT THE TIME THE STUDENTS WERE APPROACHING IT ON MAY 29.
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ALL GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS ON RADIO WERE MADE IN NAME OF "REVOLUTIONARY POWER." BUT WE HAVE HEARD NO SPECULATION ON RATSIRAKA'S ABSENCE.

9. COMMENT. ALTHOUGH SITUATION IS QUIET NOW SOME MALAGASY FEAR THAT THERE COULD BE FURTHER BREAKDOWNS OF PUBLIC SECURITY. I TEND TO AGREE. IF LOOTING WAS A SPONTANEOUS ACTION THEN THE PERPETRATORS MAY BE TEMPTED TO TRY AGAIN, ALTHOUGH HARSH PUNISHMENT OF ARRESTEES COULD SERVE AS A DETERRENT. ON THE OTHER HAND, IF LOOTERS WERE DIRECTED OR ENCOURAGED BY FORCES TRYING TO DISCREDIT REGIME, THEN THESE FORCES WILL BE LOOKING FOR FURTHER OPPORTUNITIES.
BARRETT

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED MOPUTO AND PERT LOUIS.

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NNN

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